

San Diego has long been a proud partner in our national defense. The several Department of Defense assets located here in the San Diego region are crucial to protecting our democracy and keeping our nation free. The military is also a cornerstone of our regional economy, responsible for 20% of our region's jobs.

Among these assets, the Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR) facility is a brain center that provides technological and engineering support critical to information warfare for the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Army and Coast Guard programs. San Diego is the pre-eminent location for NAVWAR headquarters given our concentration of military installations, position in the Pacific theatre, and our history as a center for technology and innovation. Since coming to Congress, I've prioritized my support for our region's role in the national defense, which includes keeping our military assets funded and resisting efforts or even rumors to move these facilities to other locations.

NAVWAR has never been more important, but it needs our support. It requires a state-of-the-art facility. However, the existing buildings are relics of WWII, once-proud aircraft production facilities now ill-suited for technology and cyber defense. As a representative in the federal government, I support the development of a new headquarters facility for NAVWAR.

This redevelopment also presents an excellent opportunity to leverage our federal investment to redevelop the underutilized and run-down properties in the area, consistent with the growth called for in the Midway-Pacific Highway Community Plan. I intend to work with local authorities so that this federal project can support revitalization. Working together, we can create a new community that's beautiful, inviting, transit-oriented, walkable, bikeable and which offers ample amenities, park space, public plazas, and desirable retail and recreation. I see Liberty Station as a successful example of federal/local cooperation, which has produced housing, attractions, a sense of community and architectural compatibility with the neighborhood.

The long process of design and approval has begun with the release of the draft EIS on May 14, 2021. And I want you to know that I believe there is a long way to go. While I support doing more than what is offered in the Navy Alternative 1, a rehab of existing buildings insufficient for the Navy's crucial cybersecurity mission, we still must work to achieve the goals I've described above. The public process we've begun gives us the opportunity to assure that.

Going forward, the Navy, the City and SANDAG need to work with planners and architects both to meet the Navy's 21st Century defense needs and to create a new and wonderful neighborhood in the Midway. We are not there yet, but we can and must achieve those ends. I expect and will urge that all the parties involved to invest the time and resources necessary to come up with a beautiful design the town could be eager to see built.

I look forward to a constructive and transparent process that our nation and our region can be proud of.